

TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
REGULAR MEETING
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MINUTES – Gisborne Conference Room

Thursday, March 7, 2013

Committee: Marc V. Johnson, Chairman; Randall Huffman, Mary Lee Kiernan, Leslie Tarkington

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Erica Mahoney, Workers' Compensation Administrator; Mary Pepe, Director of Human Resources; Mary Jo Iannuccilli, Assistant Director of Human Resources; Allison Graham, Employee Benefits Manager; Robert Lichtenfeld, Director of Human Resources BOE, Regina Williams, Assistant Director of Human Resources BOE, Kara Pellegrino, Consultant, Allen Brown, Nathaniel Witherell Executive Director, Ray Augustine, Director of Financial Operations Nathaniel Witherell, Carol Greunke, Manager Business Services Nathaniel Witherell, Lloyd Bankson, Nathaniel Witherell

The meeting was called to order at 11:04 A.M.

1. Approval of Human Resources Committee Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Ms. Kiernan, the Committee voted 4-0 to approve the minutes from the February 12, 2013 Regular Human Resources Committee Meeting.

Upon a motion by Ms. Kiernan, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Committee voted 4-0 to approve the minutes from the February 19, 2013 Human Resources Committee Meeting.

2. Review of Monthly HR Reports

• Unemployment Expense

The Committee reviewed the monthly Unemployment Charges by Department report for the period through December 31, 2012. Ms. Pepe reminded the Committee that this report will be distributed to the Committee on a quarterly basis starting with the next report issued in April 2013. In addition, Ms. Pepe commented that the costs through December 31st were down dramatically from the same six month period of one year ago. The report shows a decline of \$114,606 compared to last year at this time and it was noted that one of the reasons was the discontinuance of extended benefits.

• Workers' Compensation Loss Report

The Committee reviewed two workers' compensation reports prepared by Erica Mahoney, Workers' Compensation Administrator. Ms. Mahoney informed the Committee that workers' compensation lost time claims are decreasing. She attributed this trend to her working with departments to provide light duty programs that bring employees back to work quicker and act as a deterrent for employees staying out of work for longer periods of time.

Ms. Pepe told the Committee that they are rolling out new workers' compensation protocols in the area of instituting a policy whereas supervisors must accompany injured employees to the treating facility. Ms. Pepe added that they are providing training sessions to supervisors next week to education employees on the new process.

Ms. Tarkington asked about the 8 claims listed on the reports for Nathaniel Witherell employees during the month of February. Ms. Mahoney said that there were 3 slips and falls in the parking lot due to icy conditions. Ms. Mahoney went on further to describe the remaining 5 claims at the Nathaniel Witherell Facility.

There was a discussion about making the workers' compensation report a quarterly report to the Human Resources Committee. Ms. Kiernan stated she prefers a monthly report and the consensus was to keep it monthly.

Ms. Pepe informed the Committee about several new initiatives relative to safety. Ms. Pepe told the Committee the Safety Committee has initiated a monthly safety newsletter, brown bag lunches covering various safety and health issue topics and reported that they have come up with a new safety slogan for the Town through a contest. Ms. Pepe told the Committee that they awarded a \$100 gift certificate to Princess Erfe for her award winning safety slogan; Striving for an Accident Free Environment (S.A.F.E.)

- Vacant Position Listing

The Committee reviewed the Vacant Position Listing as of March 1, 2013. There was a question about carrying two positions on the report that may be eliminated during the budget process; the Tax Collector's Accounting Clerk I and Fleet Department's Heavy Duty Vehicle Mechanic positions. It was collectively agreed to wait for the budget process to culminate this month and revisit this issue at the April 2013 HR Committee meeting.

3. Department Requests for Position Changes

- Nathaniel Witherell

Mr. Johnson informed Nathaniel Witherell officials that there were two requests for position increases this year for the fiscal year 2013-2014 budget that were reviewed by the Human Resources Committee. The Committee reviewed a request from the Conservation Commission for a full-time position increase that was rejected. The Committee also reviewed a request from the Human Resources Department that was granted. Mr. Johnson stated that, as part of the budgetary process, their request should be reviewed and formally acted on by this committee.

Mr. Allen Brown told the Committee members that he agreed with their process and that is why they volunteered to come before the Committee to formally present their reasons for the net increase in one position today. Mr. Brown introduced Mr. Augustine and invited him to give the Committee a historical perspective on head count over recent years. Mr. Augustine began by telling the Committee that when he arrived in 2002 there was total chaos at the facility. Added to that, he informed the Committee that governmental reporting has dramatically increased over recent years. Mr. Augustine said there were 174 full-time positions in fiscal year 2003-2004. He added that the headcount had decreased to 156 today. During that time, he said that census numbers hadn't changed but the payer mix had changed adding to the responsibilities of his office that

currently has three full-time employees. Mr. Augustine explained the request for a position as a full-time person funded for half a year starting January 1, 2014. The position would be responsible for accounts receivables also known as a collections processing clerk. He said the position would be funded at about \$29,000. Mr. Augustine added that in 2002 the nursing facility operated with 258 full-time equivalents and today they have 231 full-time equivalents. Mr. Augustine wanted to stress that the request is tied directly to the Affordable Care Act that will start to affect his operations on January 1, 2014; therefore the request for a half of a budget year. He said that the Act will require the State of Connecticut to resort to forming Health Care Exchanges that will go basically from a governmental reporting entity to a private insurance provider system. This will prompt as many as 30 insurance providers to enter the arena making the reimbursement process much more strenuous for his staff.

Mr. Johnson asked about open full-time positions and if they had flexibility in creating the new position with a reciprocating cut to existing positions. Both Mr. Brown and Mr. Augustine responded that this position calls for a special expertise that would have to come from recruiting from the outside. Mr. Brown also stressed that fact that they are staffed at the bare minimums and their first responsibility is to operate the facility to meet its obligations. Mr. Johnson asked how much this new position would cost in total. Mr. Augustine stated it would be about \$60,000 per year in salary with the first year funded at a half a year's salary. He added that it would cost about \$85,000 in total with fringe benefits added in. Mr. Augustine was asked about outsourcing the position and he responded that the costs would far outweigh the benefits of having its own employee.

Ms. Tarkington stated that she had a meeting on December 7, 2012 with Nathaniel Witherell officials to discuss staffing issue questions she had. Ms. Tarkington said that there was no mention of requesting this accounting position at that meeting. Mr. Augustine responded that he was not at that meeting, but pointed out that the costs for this position had been incorporated into the Long Range Business Plan that had been extensively reviewed. He did concede that the request had not been formally broken out of the Long Range Plan but had been budgeted all along.

Ms. Kiernan asked about other nursing home facilities staffing up in response to the Affordable Care Act. Mr. Brown answered that Nathaniel Witherell is presently at or below their peers regarding staffing levels.

Mr. Huffman asked if this position would produce more revenues. Mr. Augustine said no, it would not produce more revenues. However, he stated that the purpose of this position was to dramatically improve cash flows by working with the insurance providers to improve the reimbursement process and speed up the collection process. Mr. Augustine told the Committee that in 2002 the receivables owed amounted to \$4.5 million dollars. He added that today the receivables are at a \$3.5 million dollar level and if you priced out credits the 2002 figure would be more closer to \$5 million dollars in receivables. Mr. Augustine provided these details to highlight the importance of the function. Mr. Bankson invited Ms. Carol Greunke to speak to explain the collection process that she is currently responsible for. Ms. Greunke explained that it is hard to work with the private insurance providers. She used the example that whenever the paperwork requests for reimbursements are deficient, the insurance providers will not get back to you alerting you to deficiencies in the paperwork. This extends the reimbursement process adversely affecting cash flows for the facility. She said she is constantly working with the insurance companies to expedite the reimbursement process. Ms. Greunke added that the job

responsibilities for these positions are challenged by the presence of five external entities that are constantly auditing the process. She said she is in a constant audit mode with outside entities such as Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, User Fee Groups and the Town of Greenwich. Mr. Brown added that the highest reimbursements come for the rehabilitation program and the best payer is Medicare.

Mr. Huffman asked if they would have excess staff after the completion of Project Renew. Mr. Brown responded by saying they will need more, not less staff, specifically nurses. Mr. Johnson asked if you wanted to get rid of staff how you would do it. Mr. Brown answered that they currently have about 200 nurses, of which 100 are part-timers. He said it is easy to lay off part-timers. Mr. Brown wanted to alert the Committee that the Affordable Care Act will require them to pay benefits for any part-time employee that works a weekly average of 30 hours or more. Mr. Brown also informed the Committee that because of sequestration the facility will take a 2% Medicaid reimbursement rate cut on April 1, 2013.

The discussion concluded with the Nathaniel Witherell officials and the Committee members. Upon their departure from the meeting, Mr. Johnson wanted to know how the members felt about this position. The general consensus was that everyone supported filling this accounting position. However, Ms. Tarkington had reservations about increasing the net head count. Ms. Kiernan stated she would like to see more measureable outcome data on the position.

As a result, Mr. Huffman made a motion to increase the Nathaniel Witherell headcount by one position from 156 to 157 full-time positions. In addition, the motion included the creation of this position with funding for one half of a fiscal year. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kiernan and the vote passed on a vote of 3 to 1. Ms. Tarkington voted against the motion and wanted the minutes to reflect that she supported the creation of this position. However, Ms. Tarkington was against increasing headcount and felt Nathaniel Witherell officials should have found savings in other departmental areas to fund this position.

4. Human Capital Management System Update

Ms. Pepe reported that they are working with the consultants, BerryDunn, and are close to finalizing the Request for Proposal (RFP). Ms. Pepe also reported that they have put together a five person evaluation team and have added advisors and observers to assist in the process. Ms. Kara Pellegrino told the Committee that she expects a good response to the RFP with about 7 responses.

5. M&C Performance/Compensation Review Update

Ms. Pepe told the Committee that after she and Ms. Iannuccilli reviewed the draft report from Buck Consultants they were not happy with portions of the report and returned it for further editing. Ms. Pepe said that she felt that the consultants didn't look at an adequate number of positions for benchmarking. She said that the report recommends a variety of salary increase options and recommendations to simplify the evaluation process.

Mr. Johnson asked Ms. Pepe when she thought the report would be available and if it will impact the evaluation process for this year. Ms. Pepe responded that the report should be available by March 15, 2013 and yes, it will impact this year's process. Mr. Johnson asked about the status of this year's smart goals. Ms. Pepe answered that a lot

of people did not set smart goals because they were not sure about the process for this year.

6. Items for Future Discussion

Mr. Johnson told the Committee that he will recommend a future topic to include a discussion on part-time employees and an inconsistency between the Town and Board of Education in the awarding of employee benefits. It was noted that there are a number of Board of Education part-time employees that get employee benefits and none on the Town side. Ms. Graham reminded everyone that the Affordable Care Act will require the awarding of benefits to part-time employees that work for 30 hours or more per week, on average.

7. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Huffman, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:56 P.M.



Peter Mynarski, Recording Secretary



Marc V. Johnson, HR Committee Chairman